

## February – Tomatoes

Tomatoes are at their peak on the Granite Belt and Symara Farm is producing a fine range of organically grown heirloom tomatoes which, for those of you who have not had the good fortune to experience such a tomato, have great flavour and actually melt when cooked. My favourite are the Black Russians, but I do have some Tommy Toes in my own garden this year and they are terrific for salads and being small, make a great snack just on their own – eat one and you can't stop.

One thing we are doing in the restaurant at the moment is a saffron and tomato soup with some green prawns and fresh fish poached in the soup at the last moment. I only make this when we get really good tomatoes so it has a limited season. The recipe is one of Christine Manfield's from her terrific book "Stir". Here are some other favourites from The Vineyard Cafe:

### Caramelised Tomato Tart

*A long standing Autumn favourite on the menu and a special request from Jamie – it has taken a while Jamie but here it is at last.*

#### **Filling:**

1kg Roma tomatoes  
500g red and yellow cherry tomatoes  
100ml extra virgin olive oil  
60ml balsamic vinegar  
2 tablespoons sugar  
good quality salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Chop the tomatoes and mix with the remaining ingredients in a large shallow baking tray. Roast at 200 C for approximately 1 hour or until the juices are syrupy. Stir occasionally. Cool before use.

#### **Tarts:**

Sheets of ready rolled puff pastry  
kalamata olives  
fresh goats cheese

Cut circles from the pastry sheets according to the size you want. We get 2 per sheet. Make a soft rolled fold of about ½ cm of pastry all around the circle and press down lightly on the inner edge – just enough to secure. This will help to contain the filling as the pastry bakes.

Top with a good serve of caramelised tomato filling, some olives, and diced goats cheese. Bake in a moderate to hot oven for 10 to 12 minutes.

Serve with a dressed salad. We use rocket from our garden for an entree but for a lunch dish or main meal, add some avocado and other things.

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## Italian Tomato Soup

*This is a great soup, quick to prepare with a wonderful fresh tomato taste.*

### **Ingredients:**

1kg properly ripe tomatoes  
2 cloves garlic crushed  
extra virgin olive oil  
salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper  
500ml to 750ml of good quality stock – meat, chicken or vegetable  
fresh basil

Heat the olive oil and add the tomatoes, garlic and seasoning. Cook over a high heat until the tomatoes have melted – this will only take a few minutes if you have good tomatoes. Add stock to taste and cook for another 5 minutes. Check the seasoning and stir in some shredded fresh basil to serve.

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## Tomato and Goats Cheese Salad

*This salad will take you 5 minutes to make and has fantastic flavours. Terrific with a barbecued steak.*

### **Ingredients:**

Tomatoes – I like Black Russians or Tommy Toes  
Meredith marinated goats cheese  
Fresh Basil  
Lirah Sweet Cabernet Vinegar

Slice the tomatoes and layer with the broken up cheese and fresh basil leaves. Drizzle with vinegar and a little oil – either some oil from the cheese marinade or extra virgin olive oil. Season with salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper.